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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Conditions in the Zbuch Coal Mine/Reasons for Failure to Achieve Quotas/Jet Aircraft at Nova Ves

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1.

[redacted] the Masarykuv Jubilejni Dni Coal Mine at Zbuch. This mine belongs to the Western-Bohemian Mines Administration, which has its administrative offices in Zbuch.

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2.

"The worker-director is (fnu) Svoboda. [redacted] two mining engineers, (fnu) Bambas and (fnu) Siska, actually run the operations. The other members of the management are:

Jundrich Petr - In charge of the shifts ('smennistr').

(fnu) Karlicek

(fnu) Havranek in charge of the work teams ('dulni').

Vaclav Hajek Direct the work on the surface.

Vaclav Polak

(fnu) Prusa - Chairman of the mine Council ('zavodni rada').

(fnu) Falt - Deputy-Chairman of the mine Council.

3.

"About 1,000 miners work in the pit and some 700 on the surface.

4.

"The output is always lagging behind the prescribed plan. In February 1953, for instance, the plan was fulfilled only 80%.

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(a) The main reason for this underfulfillment is [redacted] the low working morale among the miners caused by the continuous decrease of wages. Even the two top shock-workers of the mine, Jan Karel and Bohumil Jirik, who have both been awarded medals

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for outstanding work, have recently not been earning more than 7,000-8,000 Kc per month. This is unusually low for Stakhanovites. A married employee (with one child) who works on the surface earns about 3,500 Kc. per month. If he takes his meals in the canteen daily, this would not be enough to pay even for his food. The highest paid official is Director Svoboda. He earns 20,000 Kc. per month. But from this amount he pays each month 5,000 Kc. to the Party fund and another 1,000 Kc. to the Korean Aid Fund. On 13 March 53 a strike broke out in the Zbuch mine in protest against low wages. It lasted only four hours, however, because the majority of the German miners (who make up about 70% of the labor force) returned to work under the threats and persuasion of the management.

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(b) [] the work in the mine very badly organized. Frequently the miners receive conflicting orders from various officials.

(c) The fact that no new machinery or equipment has been received since 1948 adds to production difficulties. During the German Occupation the mine was much better mechanized.

5. "In their efforts to increase efficiency, the Communists introduced new working methods which are popularly referred to as 'rabovani' - reckless exploitation of resources, equipment and manpower. In order to save time all elementary security measures have been totally neglected. As a result the accident rate has increased sharply: in 1952 alone there were five fatal accidents and many injuries.

6. "In autumn 1953 the miners had a good laugh when a Soviet cutting combine was brought to Zbuch to be 'tested'. To their surprise the combine was not taken down to the pit, but tested on the surface, near the canteen. The whole show was filmed. The miners finally learned from the engineer of the combine that the combine was actually tested only once, in the Kladno coal mines, and was found unsuitable for work. From there it was first taken to Ostrava and then to several other mining regions for propaganda purposes. On each location it was filmed 'in action'. The final film is to show what modern Soviet equipment has been introduced into all Czechoslovak mines.

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7. "The fidelity bonuses, which used to be paid on the occasion of Miners' Day celebrations, are now paid quarterly. They have been greatly reduced. []

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[] The average bonus for old employees is 1,000 Kc. The highest bonuses do not exceed 2,000 Kc.

8. "The largest part of the mine's output is assigned to the power plant attached to the mine. The allocation is always insufficient since the power plant is adapted for high-grade coal. Additional coal must be brought from neighbouring pits as well as from Kladno and Most, since the Zbuch mine is unable to supply sufficient high-grade coal. The rest of the output is transported by truck to the Skoda Works in Pilsen, to Ceske Budejovice and to Prague. Part of it is exported to the German Federal Republic.
9. "Special allocations of coal to miners and mining employees were discontinued in early autumn 1952 and then reintroduced, after strong protests, that November. However, instead of good quality coal, only inferior brown coal from the Most mines was distributed. Though the management promised that double allocations would be issued of this low quality coal, only 20 g were distributed per person. That was the same amount miners used to receive of the high quality coal. Moreover, only one member of a family could get this per capita allocation free of charge. If two members of the same family were working in the mine, only one could claim a free allocation.

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10. "A new pit is being sunk between Chotesov and Mantov. The preliminary tests were rather promising and showed the presence of much higher grade coal than that at Zbuzh. Further coal deposits have been found near Sulkov, but the experts have decided that their exploitation would not be profitable on account of excessive amounts of water.
11. "Early in 1952 an SNB post was attached to the Zbuzh mine. Several SNB men are permanently stationed there. The leader of the pit's militia is security referent (fnu) Stich. The editor-in-chief of the weekly 'Zapadocesky Hornik' is Frantisek Zavrel, a staunch Communist. Miners are forced to subscribe to this and other Communist papers and periodicals in the amount of 10 Kc per month.
12. "The Chairman of the local National Committee of Zbuzh is (fnu) Tesky. His deputy, who was acting for him in March 1953, is (fnu) Faur.
13. "A forced labor camp, located on the right-hand side of the road leading to Domaslice and Pilsen, is attached to the Zbuzh coal mines. It consists of four primitive barracks surrounded by a wooden fence and barbed-wire. At every corner of the camp there is a watch tower, six meters high, equipped with flood lights. A Militia-Commander (fnu) Stich, is in charge of the camp. All the prisoners work in the Masaryk pit, guarded by SNB-men. They are not allowed to maintain contacts with civilian miners.

Jet Aircraft at Nova Ves

14. "A new airfield for jet aircrafts is under construction near Nova Ves. The runways are about 3 km long. Family houses for pilots and airfield personnel are being built near the village of Lina.

15. "At the beginning of March 1953 a jet which took off from the Nova Ves airfield crashed soon after the take off. The pilot was killed. [redacted] This plane wreckage did not catch fire, because these jets have a special device which empties the fuel tanks automatically as soon as the plane hits the ground. Pieces of the aircraft were scattered within a radius of one km. [redacted] a machine gun and a box of cartridges among the wreckage. The Czechoslovak pilots flying these jets at Nova Ves were trained by Soviet instructors at the beginning of 1953.

Miscellaneous Notes

16. "Since the end of January 1953 [redacted] there has been an acute bread shortage in the village of Vejprnice in the Pilsens district. Only 500 gr of bread per day can be bought per person.
17. "In January 1953 a former corporal in the Czechoslovak Army, who had previously escaped to the West, returned to the country, allegedly on some mission, and was arrested by the SNB. He visited his wife who lives in the village of Uherka and was recognized by neighbours who denounced him to the authorities."

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